

Marine Aquarium Council

Best Practice Guidance for the Core Ecosystem and Fishery Management International Performance Standard for the Marine Aquarium Trade

Issue 1 – July 1, 2001

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MAC Standards Review and Committees Responsible for This Document

This Best Practice Guidance document is intended to be read in conjunction with the MAC Core Ecosystem and Fishery Management Standard and will be in effect until at least July 1, 2003.

This Ecosystem and Fishery Management Best Practice Guidance document and its accompanying MAC Core Standard will also be used in a series of test certifications, the feedback from which will be reviewed at a MAC Certifiers Workshop.

Suggested amendments to both will be forwarded to the MAC Standards Committee for their review.

Amendments Issued Since Publication		
Amend. No	Date	Description of Amendment
-	July 2001	Issue One Published

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How to Use This Best Practice Guidance Document

This Best Practice Guidance document has been written to assist stakeholders—especially, resource managers, collectors, and industry operators seeking to be certified—in interpreting and achieving compliance with the MAC Core Standards.

This Best Practice Guidance document does not describe additional requirements beyond those already contained in the MAC Core Standards but provides clarification, background information, and examples of how compliance could be achieved. This document contains a series of recommendations on methods and techniques and describes the type of evidence that certifiers will be looking for when undertaking an assessment of compliance with the MAC Core Standards. It includes the types of documentation of practices, policies, procedures, and historical records that should be made available by the certification client to expedite the audit process.

This Best Practice Guidance document is also meant to help certifiers identify the types of issues they will need to research and develop investigative tools for their research. The examples in this document are not exhaustive.

This Best Practice Guidance document is also a teaching tool for those who are developing techniques for implementing the appropriate MAC Core Standard and monitoring ongoing compliance.

The MAC Secretariat has published this document based on consultation with stakeholders and the input of the Standards Advisory Group. As MAC Certification audits are conducted, data from participants and other stakeholders will enable the Marine Aquarium Council to improve and update this guidance document. The Marine Aquarium Council asks certifiers and other users of the MAC Certification to comment on and share their experiences using this document.

Best Practice Guidance: MAC Core Ecosystem and Fishery Management Standard

0.1 Purpose

To provide guidance on how to comply with the requirements of the MAC Core Ecosystem and Fishery Management Standard so that the collection area is managed according to principles of ecosystem management in order to ensure ecosystem integrity and the sustainable use of the marine aquarium fishery.

1 Management Principles

1.1.1 to 1.1.5 Principles Related to Live Rock

Collection should be managed so that:

- live rock collection does not compromise the basic habitat structure of the reef;
- collection does not destroy reef flat tidal pool environments;
- collection or activities associated with collection do not convert rocky habitats into rubble or sand environments that do not recover;
- collection is focused on the outer reef flat/reef crest zone, where regeneration is rapid; and
- care is taken not to break through elevated “algal rim” structures on the reef made of live rock.

Principles Related to Coral

Collection should be managed so that:

- coral collecting is done in a planned and systematic manner, confined to areas of healthy reef with coral cover as determined by those managing the fishery;
- a harvested reef section should be allowed to recover before re-harvesting may occur;
- collecting of corals should not be permitted on damaged, stressed, or recovering reefs;
- coral colonies should be thinned from dense areas of coral growth. Isolated coral colonies should not be collected. The primary target should be corals in competitive overgrowth relationships with other corals;
- communities or individuals involved in the collection of corals should begin to engage in activities that protect the reef. For example, they may want to remove crown-of-thorns starfish from reefs in the collection areas when they become abundant;
- collection should be confined mostly to small size classes;
- slow-growing genera (massive corals, brain corals, etc.) should be collected only from areas where their ability to grow into adult corals is prevented or from areas where fast-growing corals are overgrowing them; and
- corals that are broken or harvested and later found to be unusable shall be replanted or replaced in as close as reasonably possible to their

original position and conditions for re-growth.

Principles Related to Marine Fish

Fish collection should be managed so that:

- the use of chemicals is prohibited in the capture of fish;
- only lightweight, breakable rods should be used as collecting probes in fish capture. Heavy metal bars, which break corals easily, are prohibited;
- intentional destruction of the coral colony is prohibited. When minor breakage occurs, the branches should be wedged tightly within the original colony or nearby substrate so that their survival rate will be enhanced; and
- for fish that require coral, e.g., for feeding or habitat, coral colonies should not be dislodged from the reef. For collection in calm lagoonal areas, unattached colonies can be picked up, the fish removed, and the coral replaced to its original position.

2 Collection Area Management Plan

- 2.1 The Collection Area Management Plan must be a specific document, and its implementation must be documented.
- 2.2 The Collection Area Management Plan should show how it is consistent with any collection area or fishery management plans produced by the appropriate authority.

3 Components of a Collection Area Management Plan

- 3.1 The Collection Area Management Plan should include at least all the components described in Annex 1 of the Core Standards.

4 Effectiveness of a Collection Area Management Plan

4.1 Periodic Audit of the Collection Area Management Plan

- 4.1.1 The periodic audits of the Collection Area Management Plan undertaken by the appropriate authority should be available with the plan.

4.2 Review of the Collection Area Management Plan

- 4.2.1 The Collection Area Management Plan should be regularly reviewed to ensure its ongoing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness, and any amendments to the plan should be available with the plan.

5 Communication

5.1 Stakeholder Communication

- 5.1.1 Communication between stakeholders should be documented.